

Josephine County Democrats

General Meeting

In person/zoom

Oct. 11 2022

Action by Vote

- Approved new PCPs Sheryl Eldredge, Brittany Weifenbach, Carole Gallagher, Kayt Koopersmith, Jim Deiffenderfer, Joan Deiffenderfer, Georgia Moulton and Tamara Johnson.
- Changed Standing Rules: The disabled will be accommodated at every Josephine County Democrats event
- Endorsed clinical delivery of psilocybin for medical use (Ballot Measure 17-111).
- Took no stand on the manufacture of psilocybin in Josephine County (Ballot Measure 17-110)
- Voted not to endorse Ordinance No. 2022-005, the Law Enforcement Retail Activities Tax (LRAT) on the November ballot with explanation for that vote.
- Voted to support county-wide law enforcement.

Events

Chair Dorothy Yetter announced several upcoming events. There will be an Open House at the office 514 NE 7th Street in Grants Pass (7th and C). This will be the kickoff for GOTV and Neighborhood Leader activities. Sen. Jeff Merkley will do a statewide kickoff announcement by Zoom, which will be televised at the event. Because the office is not handicapped accessible, there will be tables and activities set up in the parking lot at the corner of 7th and C streets.

Our November meeting will be an in-person only election watch party.

Our December meeting will focus on the election of new officers. Anyone wishing to run for a position on the executive committee: Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, can contact Rick Flora or anyone currently on the executive committee.

Brian Clark said the Election Protection Program will be underway as soon as ballots start coming in to the County Clerk's office for counting. Volunteers are needed to monitor ballot processing – this is being done by video cameras this year so you can do it from home. Volunteers are also needed to check ballot boxes around the cities and county to make sure there is no suspicious activity going on around them. Contact Brian at election-protection@josephinedemocrats.org to volunteer.

Brian also urged people to join the highway cleanup team. Democrats are in charge of cleaning up along Hwy 199 in the RCC area. At least 10 people are needed to do a thorough job. The last cleanup day there were only three who showed up to help. Sheri Moran said cleanup duty can pay off though, as she and her husband found a total of \$35 while picking up trash.

Reports

Treasurer Colette Storms said about \$3000 was spent on voter outreach including a bulk mailing, texting and materials. Currently our bank balance is at \$8,300.

Colette also reported she led a team to Grants Pass High School for voter registration and it went well.

Dorothy reported we have 79 Neighborhood Leaders this year, the most we've ever had.

Campaign Committee Chair Lynda Spangler said she now has yard signs for candidates at the office and her campaign group is turning now to GOTV efforts. She has yet to get signs for Tina Kotek, however, as she hasn't been able to connect with her campaign so far.

Speaker

Grants Pass Mayor Sarah Bristol gave a report about what is going on in the city. She said there is a recall going on tied to a couple of candidates running against Rob Pell and Curt Collins. They are unhappy with the Council's efforts to deal with the homeless problem in the city, she said. Challenging Rob Pell is Clint Scherf who was defeated by Pell in the last election. Challenging Curt Collins is Dwane Yunker. Rick Riker is running unopposed in his ward. Molly Nichols is running against Joel King. Bristol said she doesn't know Nichols but she does know she is very knowledgeable about homeless issues regarding property. Bristol said she fears if Scherf and Yunker are elected the city's efforts to move the homeless out of city parks will take a step backwards. The city has been trying to find an acceptable place to accommodate the homeless away from our parks because they are allowed to sleep there by court order as long as there is no low-barrier shelter where they can go. Their goal has been hampered by people who don't want a homeless camp nearby or won't sell their property to a non-profit for a homeless facility. "I just wanted to let you know there is tension in our community created by a small but loud, bullying group that has an intense style," Bristol said.

Discussion

Lively discussions took place regarding the two county ballot measures.

Psilocybin – The manufacture of psilocybin for medicinal use was debated, with some saying they are concerned it will turn into an illegal operation putting strain on our law enforcement while others argued the manufacture of psilocybin is nothing like marijuana and does not sell like marijuana. A concern that licensed manufacturers would overproduce and sell on the black market was expressed. It was agreed by vote not to endorse or oppose the manufacture of psilocybin in Josephine County. It will be allowed in the City of Grants Pass, however, as the City Council voted not to put the question on the ballot, which makes the state's legalization of it automatically take place in the city. The City of Cave Junction is asking voters to wait for two years and consider the matter again when more is known about its impact and use.

The delivery of psilocybin was another matter. A few said they were leery of psilocybin as a medicine because it hasn't been approved for that use by the FDA. A retired pharmacist said psilocybin is a natural substance that can't be patented to sell at a profit by drug companies so it

is unlikely to be submitted to the FDA for approval. The majority arguing for the medical use of the hallucinogenic substance cited studies showing that it helped people and that as Democrats we shouldn't be telling people what medicines they can or can't use. PCPs voted to endorse a yes vote on the clinical use of psilocybin in the county.

Sales Tax – The overwhelming consensus of the PCPs present, both in person and on Zoom, was to vote no on the sales tax question on the ballot. The ordinance governing the sales tax is not well thought out, taxes medical and dental services and supplies and would make bookkeeping a nightmare for our small businesses, especially those in service businesses. In addition, no one really knows how much income law enforcement would get from the seasonal tax and there was some concern about a board appointed by Commissioners and City Councils that would have the ability to see people's tax returns to find out if they reported their sales tax and paid properly. Those arguing that Democrats shouldn't take a stand on the measure said it might send a message to the community that we didn't support law enforcement. So after a discussion, it was decided to take a separate vote saying Democrats do support funding for county-wide law enforcement and our sheriff and law enforcement officers but we have too many concerns about this particular way of funding law enforcement to support it's passing.